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Principals Committee
Discussion Paper
Security in Rwandan Refugee Camps

(19)

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REF
p202-05ISSUE FOR DECISION:

What is the United States position on the UN-proposed options for improving security in the Zairian refugee camps and what type of support is the USG willing to provide?

BACKGROUND ON DECISION:

Security in the Camps: Since the massive outflow of Hutus in June and July, relatively few have returned to Rwanda.

Hutus have announced the establishment of a government in exile, begun training and preparations for renewed civil war, and terrorized refugees who indicate a desire to return to Rwanda.

No UN forces are in the camps and, because of radical hard-line Hutus, the camps have become dangerous for relief workers and refugees. Relief organizations have stated that the moral implications of supporting those who were responsible for committing genocide earlier this year, coupled with deteriorating security conditions, may force them to abandon their mission. At least one leading NGO has already shut down operations in the camps.

Conditions in Rwanda: There have been some reports criticizing the GOR for revenge killings of Hutus by Tutsis and lackluster efforts to encourage repatriation. The GOR claims it desires to initiate reconciliation and encourage repatriation but lacks the resources. RPF troops have not been paid for several months. Although the international community has begun efforts to clear Rwanda's IFI arrears and provide support to key ministries, no financial assistance has been provided to date to the GOR.

There have been some efforts by the GOR to make good on their word. Most of the RPA prefects, including at least one civilian hard-liner, have been replaced with civilians supportive of repatriation and sensitive to the need to address Hutu concerns about physical security and the rule of law. The GOR has made efforts to arrest Tutsis who conducted revenge killings and is discussing ways to avoid arbitrary arrest or detention of individuals accused of participating in the genocide.

At the same time the GOR has not: named a point person on human rights; provided UNAMIR unlimited access throughout Rwanda;

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allowed UNAMIR radio to broadcast; initiated significant efforts towards military/political reconciliation and integration; or, established a process to settle land disputes.

OPTIONS:

UN Proposals to Enhance Security in the Refugee Camps: The result of several UN technical missions to the region, the UN Secretary General's recent report on security in the Zairian refugee camps offers three options (1 - 3 below). The UN has provided no cost estimates.

The UNSC will continue discussions of the report this week. It is expected that, rather than authorize any new or expanded mission at this stage, the UNSC will send a letter to the SYG asking him to begin active troop recruitment, provide cost estimates for specific options and refine his concept of operations. This week, the UNSC is also expected to renew and perhaps modify UNAMIR's mandate.

Rwanda will assume Presidency of the UNSC in December, and we will try to minimize Council activity on Rwanda during this period. However, since it is hard to justify delaying any formal Council action on camp security until January, we may need to press the Rwandan Perm Rep. to recuse himself when the Council takes up the SYG's follow-on report in December.

Option One: A Two-phased Operation to Establish Temporary Safe Areas Inside the Zairian Camps (Modified "Bubble Concept"): This would be a robust Chapter VI mission requiring 3,000-5,000 mechanized, well-equipped, well-trained troops for up to 30 months. In Phase I, each battalion would establish temporary safe zones for civilians within the camps, segregating armed military/militia. The UN force would facilitate the return of refugees to Rwanda and provide protection for humanitarian operations. In addition, the UN would support the training by private contractors or UNCIVPOL of Zairian police or untainted Rwandan Gendarmarie to take over camps security in Phase II, once the battalion moves on to the next camp.

Also in Phase II, a single motorized company of UN troops would remain behind with the newly trained local police force until each safe area is closed. A vital prerequisite for success is creation by the Rwandan government of conditions conducive to the safe return of refugees, including access to Hutu-owned land and political reconciliation.

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Option Two: Chapter VII UN Force to remove forcibly former Rwandan government officials, soldiers and militia from the camps into the interior of Zaire. This mission would require 10,000 to 12,000 extremely capable troops able to fight the ex-FAR and militia who would resist separation from the civilian population. The Secretary General argues that moving the ex-FAR and militia is the only way to prevent resumption of the civil war. However, he acknowledges the complexity of the mission and the UN's inability to recruit the necessary troops.

Option Three: Same mission as in Option 2, conducted by one or more countries forming a multinational force blessed but not organized by the UN, as in Haiti or Operation Turquoise. The UN considers this a more viable option than #2, but doubts any country is prepared to take on the mission.

All of the above options are problematic, but the international community remains at a loss to suggest a better plan to reduce the potential for renewed civil war or facilitate repatriation.

- Successful execution of Option 1 would pose a significant challenge even to highly capable forces, which are unlikely to be forthcoming. (Only Pakistan has agreed to provide troops.) Civilian contractors could not be expected to fulfill this mission. Insertion of UN forces to establish safe areas risks igniting open conflict with the Hutu military/militia, who may resist isolation and repatriation of civilians. Moreover, the chances of successfully training "clean", capable local police to assume responsibility for camp security are slim. Most importantly, without genuine political reconciliation inside Rwanda, which seems remote at present, there is considerable risk in trying to return Hutu refugees.

There are also significant questions about the Secretary General's concept of operations. For instance, why are heavily mechanized units required? Are more troops requested than are necessary? Why must the UN establish a separately-mandated mission for Zaire, albeit under UNAMIR operational control and using UNAMIR logistics infrastructure?

If the Principals favor Option 1, they may want to consider the following conditions:

-- reducing the force size to fewer than 3,000 (recognizing this may extend the length of the mission);

-- eliminating the requirement that the forces be "mechanized infantry";

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-- making the forces part of UNAMIR, rather than a new mission;

-- authorizing the expanded force only after we know there are capable nations willing to do it;

-- proceeding with the military "bubble" operation only if, in parallel, the Rwandan Government had established the other part of a comprehensive system -- i.e. appropriate conditions for the return of refugees.

- Options 2 and 3 appear to be virtual non-starters. As the Secretary General's military advisor noted sarcastically last week, it would take "five years" for the UN to recruit and deploy the required forces. It is also unlikely any capable country would volunteer and finance its own forces to undertake the mission.

Alternative Options: There are at least three other options not presented by the Secretary General: 4) do nothing; 5) expand UNAMIR modestly or hire civilian contractors to provide simple daylight security for humanitarian relief workers; or, 6) provide simple daylight security plus initiate a small pilot project to test the feasibility of Option One.

Option Four: Doing nothing: This would likely lead to NGOs pulling out, cause further deterioration of camp security and potentially further destabilize the region, particularly Burundi. Furthermore, the international community may face tremendous criticism for turning its back on innocent civilians a second time.

Option Five: Providing daylight security to protect humanitarian assistance workers and assure food distribution to innocent civilians: Like Option 1 above, providing daylight security alone would not deter resumption of the civil war nor resolve the NGOs moral dilemma of feeding past perpetrators of genocide. Arguably, it heightens the international community's complicity in facilitating Hutu preparations to restart the war. On the other hand, providing daylight security is an achievable, if open-ended mission, which potentially could be fulfilled by civilian contractors hired by UNHCR rather than peacekeepers. If coupled with wet-feeding, an expensive and labor-intensive alternative to providing solid food (which is easily controlled by militia), daylight security could improve conditions in the camps and encourage NGOs remain. Most importantly, it would enable the international community to do something, while

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accepting its apparent inability to prevent renewed civil warfare at an acceptable cost.

Option Six: A combination of providing daylight security plus an initial pilot effort to create temporary safe areas inside one or two test camps. This hybrid suffers from all of the impediments discussed above. It would be less ambitious and less costly than option one and would enable the international community to determine the military and political feasibility of encouraging Hutu civilians to repatriate, if given the opportunity. It could also test the GOR's desire to create an atmosphere conducive to repatriation.

The initial pilot could mirror the robust Chapter VI mission described as the "bubble concept" but using only one battalion for a period of 30 to 60 days in a portion of one camp.

Targeting the UN Effort:

The Secretary General's report specifically addresses the need to establish security in the Zairian refugee camps. Intimidation of refugees and interference with NGO efforts are present to some degree in all of the camps in the region. It may be desirable to target any repatriation efforts toward camps in Burundi or Tanzania first rather than the most difficult camps in Zaire. Simultaneously, a daylight security program could be initiated in the camps where NGOs face the most significant troubles.

Conditions on the Government of Rwanda:

It may be desirable to establish benchmarks against which GOR efforts to encourage repatriation can be measured. These benchmarks could include the following and should be met before, or carried out in conjunction with, a UN effort to facilitate refugee return. The GOR should:

- allow UNAMIR radio to operate immediately and broadcast conciliatory messages;
- create a process for settlement of land disputes as a matter of high priority;
- enter public and genuine discussions with moderate elements of the ex-FAR and former Rwandan government to establish cooperation in the conduct of the tribunal effort and political reconciliation and military integration;
- allow unimpeded access to UNAMIR and human rights monitors.

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U. S. Support

Recruitment: We have been working with the UN to identify and assist in the recruitment of potential troop contributing countries. UNDPKO does not expect any country to step forward unless the U.S. assists in an aggressive recruitment effort. While high-level involvement in recruiting countries may be successful, it might imply that the U.S. is willing to provide more support than is desirable or possible.

Direct Mission Support: U.S. troop involvement is not being considered. However, the U.S. could continue to provide lift, equipment and other support on a reimbursable basis.

Congressional Issues:

We must consult with Congress immediately on any decision we may take that involves expanding UNAMIR or establishing a new UN peacekeeping mission. We also need to decide whether we would allow a hostile reaction from Congress to change our policy. We lack the funds to pay for any new or expanded mission and need to weigh especially carefully all decisions on new peacekeeping missions. If progress continues in Angola and the Principals decide to endorse options 1, 2 or 6 in Rwanda, we could be asking Congress to go along with two new/expanded and expensive missions. Congressional reaction to a new Rwanda mission is likely to be negative, given the cost, the questionable viability of the mission and doubts about the sub-region's importance to U.S. national security.

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